

As I See It

- John Tracy

Is the Tail Wagging the Dog?

At the 2006 City Council Retreat, goals for the year 2007 were established by the City Council. The top goal, the one and only one which received a vote by each Council Member, was maintenance to the City Streets.

This came on the heels of the hiring process of the new City Manager. Each candidate interviewed was asked what their first impression of Wellington was, and each commented on the poor conditions of our streets. One candidate even warned the Council that once you've gotten behind on street maintenance, bonds generally have to be issued in order to get caught up.

And while the 2007 Street Maintenance budget was increased \$50,000, that amount only scratches the surface (no pun intended) on the road (again, no pun intended), to revitalizing our streets.

After receiving 8 votes by the City Council at the 2006 Retreat, the Capital Improvement Plan places the majority of street repairs (including Vandenburg) were placed on the back burner. And now, it definitely looks like we're going to have to issue bonds if we want to fix our streets.

Just the opposite, improvements to the intersection of 15th and "A" Street only receive one vote at the 2006 Retreat; obviously a low priority with the City Council. But just a couple of months after the Retreat, the Council was convinced by staff that a "round-a-bout" was needed and by a 5-3 vote, the issue passed.

Does the Council have a direction in which it is leading Wellington and if so, is it staying on course? Or does the Council allow staff to influence their commitment to their goals for the future of Wellington and if so, doesn't this mean that the tail wagging the dog?

We've are nearing completion of the 2007 Retreat. But I'm not hopeful that any of the results will be followed. And after the budget meeting of August 14 in which it was vowed that the 2008 Budget presented for approval would not be higher than the 2007 budget, it appears as though the 2008 Budget will be presented with nearly a \$22,000 increase.

The tail is definitely wagging the dog.

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